

News

Swiss Life Asset Managers honours the best theses on financial topics

5 November 2020

Wednesday evening, in virtual format, Swiss Life Asset Managers, with Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts and media partner “Finanz und Wirtschaft” presented the Swiss Life Thesis Award for the best Master’s and Bachelor’s theses in the financial field for the seventh consecutive year.

A total of twenty-four Bachelor's and Master's theses on a wide range of topics were submitted from universities across Switzerland, all with one thing in common: they address relevant financial issues. Four papers were judged to be excellent by the expert jury – composed of financial sector representatives. Yesterday evening, they received the Swiss Life Thesis Award. In addition to the award, the winners were honoured with a financial prize for their outstanding performance. The award ceremony took place in a virtual format for the first time, due to the current protective measures to curb the Covid-19 pandemic.

Stefan Mächler, Chief Investment Officer of the Swiss Life Group, praised the graduates’ achievements at yesterday’s prize-giving ceremony: “Presenting a research topic in a way that is both academically substantiated and at the same time practice-relevant is a real challenge. The results of the submitted papers are very interesting and of practical benefit. We want to use this prize to encourage business professionals to deal with financial issues in a differentiated manner and to invest in their financial training.” Prof. Dr. Christoph Lengwiler, jury member and external lecturer at the Institute for Financial Services Zug (IFZ) of the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, was also enthusiastic about the quality: “I am pleased to see excellent work

from the financial field again this year. All nominees can be very proud of their performance.”

Review of the award winners

Nicola Illi, from Küssnacht am Rigi, a graduate of Lucerne School of Business, addressed the topic of sustainability in the financial sector in her Master's thesis. She identified factors that determine the level of corporate social responsibility and ESG (environmental, social and governance) engagement at banks. The results indicate what motivations might be behind increased ESG engagement. She received the **Swiss Life Thesis Award in the Master's category** worth CHF 5000. The jury's verdict: "Ms Illi has written an excellent paper with a strong academic character. The Master's thesis convinces with its stringent approach, challenging methodological framework and excellent embedding of empirical findings in the existing literature."



Nicola Illi, winner of the 2020 Swiss Life Thesis Award in the Master's category

Stefan Roth, from Oberlunkhofen, a graduate of the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, shows in his Master's thesis how wealth management decision-makers can make use of distributed ledger technology to strengthen confidence in their organisation and services. Over several phases, he has developed a framework that helps decision-makers in wealth management to choose the right path in conjunction with distributed ledger technology. The jury's verdict: "From a practical point of view, the final framework offers significant added value beyond the wealth management business. This work also impresses through the author's conceptual framework and analytical skills." The jury acknowledged this work with an **Honourable Mention in the Master's category**, worth CHF 2500.



Stefan Roth, winner of the 2020 Honourable Mention in the Master's category

Aurore Pittet, from Gimel, a graduate of The School of Management and Engineering Vaud, analysed the profitability of the clients of a financial institution in her thesis. She put forward specific quantifiable recommendations for each service in the various customer segments by using benchmarks, strategic goals and business data. The jury's verdict: "In this thesis, different KPIs were compared, analysed and evaluated for their advantages and disadvantages. Accordingly, the results obtained are broadly based, transparent and meaningful. With this work, Aurore Pittet earned the **Swiss Life Thesis Award in the Bachelor's category**, which is worth CHF 5000."



Aurore Pittet, winner of the Swiss Life Thesis Award 2020 in the Bachelor's category

Joel Messmer, from Romanshorn, a graduate of St. Gallen University of Applied Sciences, studied cryptocurrencies in his Bachelor's thesis. He examined the accounting and tax treatment of Bitcoin. The jury's verdict: "This Bachelor's thesis was a great success as the author fully achieved his goals. All the questions were answered in detail. The work is broadly researched and enriched with expert interviews." The author received an **honourable Mention in the Bachelor's category**, worth CHF 2500.



Joel Messmer, winner of the 2020 Honourable Mention in the Bachelor's category

The prizewinners' institutions receive CHF 1500 for the bestowal of the Swiss Life Thesis Award, and CHF 1000 for the Honourable Mention.

About the Swiss Life Thesis Award

The Swiss Life Thesis Award, presented in cooperation with the Institute for Financial Services Zug IFZ, part of Lucerne School of Business, and the business paper "Finanz und Wirtschaft", provides a platform for innovative and practice-oriented research work at Swiss institutes of higher education. The best theses in the fields of financial investments, financial markets, financial services companies, financial instruments and corporate finance are eligible for awards each year.

Further information on the Swiss Life Thesis Award and a video on the winning projects can be found at www.swisslife-am.com/studyaward.

Swiss Life Thesis Award jury members

- Philippe Béguelin, Head of Markets Department, Finanz und Wirtschaft
- Peter Kuster, Deputy Head of Topics and Content in Communication at the Swiss National Bank
- Prof. Dr. Christoph Lengwiler, external lecturer at the Institute of Financial Services Zug IFZ, Lucerne School of Business
- Dr. Peter Kaste, Head of Financial Engineering, Swiss Life Asset Managers
- Dr. Diego Liechti, Member of the Executive Board, Nest Collective Foundation

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Swiss Life Asset Managers

Swiss Life Asset Managers has over 160 years of experience in managing the assets of the Swiss Life Group. This insurance background has exerted a key influence on the investment philosophy of Swiss Life Asset Managers, which is governed by such principles as value preservation, the generation of consistent and sustainable performance and a responsible approach to risks. That's how we lay the groundwork for our customers to make solid, long-term plans – in self-determination and with financial confidence. This tried and tested approach means that Swiss Life Asset Managers is also available to third-party customers in Switzerland, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the UK.

As at 30 June 2020, Swiss Life Asset Managers managed a total volume of CHF 256.0 billion in assets for the Swiss Life Group, including over CHF 82.9 billion for third-party asset management. Swiss Life Asset Managers is also a leading real estate manager¹ in Europe, with a total of CHF 256.0 billion in assets under management, of which CHF 71.4 billion are invested in real estate. In addition, Swiss Life Asset Managers has real estate under administration of CHF 28.3 billion through its subsidiaries Livit and Corpus Sireo. Total real estate under management at the end of June 2020 thus stood at CHF 99.7 billion.

Swiss Life Asset Managers has over 2200 employees in Europe.

¹ INREV fund manager survey 2020 (assets under management as at 31 December 2019)